

was a lot of skeptics about that in America then, and you can understand why. Why would you want to work with the enemy? People lost lives, had their families turned upside down, were wondering why we even cared about a former enemy. But fortunately, enough citizens and the President believed in the power of liberty. And today, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi, as a result of Japan being a democracy, talking about the peace we all want.

Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq. They'll be talking about the peace in the Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their freedom. I believe that women in the Middle East want to live in a free society. I believe moms in the Middle East want to raise their child in a free world. I believe all these things, because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

Extending freedom means confronting the evil of anti-Semitism. Today, I signed the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004. This law commits the Government to keep a record of anti-Semitic acts throughout the world and also a record of responses to those acts. This Nation will keep watch and make sure the ancient impulse of anti-Semitism never finds a home in the modern world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little

is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and the deep faith in the values that makes this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that era when one—that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember trying to console people, and a guy grabbed me by the arm, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. On to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. at the Sound Advice Amphitheater. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; professional golfer Jack Nicklaus; Emilie Shaw, wife of Representative Clay Shaw; Tom Gallagher, chief financial officer, Florida Department of Financial Services; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Daytona Beach, Florida October 16, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here on a beautiful Florida Saturday afternoon. Laura and I are honored so many came out to say hello.

We're here to ask for your vote and ask for your help. As Jeb said, it's nearly voting time, and we're counting on you to get

your friends and neighbors to the polls. Everybody ought to vote in this country. In a democracy, we have a duty to vote. So round up everybody you can find, head them to the polls, and remind them, if they want a safer country, a stronger country, and a better country, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

And perhaps the reason why you should put me back in is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years. I love her dearly, and she's a great First Lady.

I'm proud of my Vice President. I recognize he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. *[Laughter]* I didn't pick him for his hair. I picked him because of his experience and sound judgment.

I'm proud of my brother Jeb. You've been through a lot of hardship in this State—not one hurricane, not two, but four. The people of this State rose to the occasion, as did your Governor. It's amazing what happens in hard times. The compassion of this country comes forth, and the compassion of the people of Florida came forth, neighbor helping neighbor, people putting their arm around somebody who hurts. I hope the Federal Government did—recognized that we did as much as we can possibly do, and we'll continue to help the people of this State get its feet back on the ground.

I want to thank Monty for his service to the country and for his introducing Jeb up here today. The Lieutenant Governor is with us, and I appreciate Toni Jennings. I appreciate all the State and local folks who are here.

I want to thank my friend Bill France. He's got something to do with cars over here. *[Laughter]* I'm proud he's here. One of the most amazing events of my life, at least as the Presidency, was to go to the NASCAR race here at the Daytona 500.

Most of all, I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, the people who are putting up all the signs, turning out crowds like this at this rally, the people who are making the phone calls. There is

no doubt in my mind that with your help, we'll carry Florida again and win a great victory on November the 2d.

The last few years, the American people have come to know me. They know my blunt way of speaking. I get that from Mother. *[Laughter]* They know that sometimes I mangle the English language. I get that from Dad. *[Laughter]* Americans also know that I tell you exactly what I'm going to do, and I keep my word.

When I came into office, the stock market had been in serious decline for 6 months. And then we had a recession. To help families and to get this economy going again, I pledged to reduce taxes. I kept my word.

Because we acted, the recession was one of the shallowest in American history. Over the last 3 years, our economy has grown at the fastest rate of any major industrialized nation. The national unemployment rate is at 5.4 percent, lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The unemployment rate in your State is 4.5 percent. Farm income is up. Homeownership rate is at an alltime high. This economy is moving forward, and we're not going to go back to the days of big Government, tax and spend.

To make sure quality jobs are created here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations on our job creators. That means we've got to do something about these junk lawsuits that are hurting small-business owners.

Listen, to keep jobs here, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. It's a plan that encourages conservation and encourages the use of renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It encourages clean coal technology. It encourages the exploration for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. To keep jobs here, America must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To create jobs here, we need to open up markets for U.S. products. Listen, we

open up our markets for goods from overseas, and that's good for you. When you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how the market works. And so, therefore, I'm saying to other countries like China, "Treat us the way we treat you." See, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, if the playing field is level.

To create jobs, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money and keep your taxes low.

My opponent has his own history on the economy.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. In 20 years as a Senator from Massachusetts, he's built a record of a Senator from Massachusetts. [*Laughter*] He has voted to raise taxes 98 times.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's in 20 years. That's about five times a year. I'd call that a pattern. I'd call that an indicator. He can run from his record, but he cannot hide.

He looked in the camera the other night, and he said he promised not to raise taxes on anybody earning—that earns less than \$200,000 a year. He said it with a straight face. [*Laughter*] The problem is, to keep that promise he would have to break almost all of his other ones. See, he's promised \$2.2 trillion of new spending. That's with a "T."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He said he's going to pay for it by taxing the rich, but you raise only about 600 billion if you raise the top two brackets. So there's a gap between what he's going to spend and what money he can collect. And so guess who usually pays—fills that gap.

Audience members. We do!

The President. There's something else wrong with taxing the rich. The rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason: to slip the bill and stick you with it. [*Laughter*] We're not going to let him tax you;

we're going to carry Florida and win in November.

When I came into office, our public schools had been waiting decades for hopeful reform. Too many of our children were shuffled through school, year after year, without learning the basics. I pledged to restore accountability to our schools, to raise the standards, and to end the soft bigotry of low expectations. And I kept my word. Our children are making sustained gains in reading and math. We're closing an achievement gap, and we're not going to go back to the days of mediocrity and low expectations.

To build a more hopeful America, we must have the best prepared and most highly skilled workforce in the world. We live in a global economy. Most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only one in four of our students gets there. So we'll fund early intervention programs in our high schools to help at-risk students. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

When I came to office, we had a problem in Medicare. Medicine was changing; Medicare was not. Let me give you an example. Medicare would pay hundreds of thousands of dollars—tens of thousands of dollars for heart surgery but not one single dime for the prescription drug coverage—for the prescription drugs that would prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That wasn't fair to our seniors and didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. I pledged to bring Republicans and Democrats together to strengthen and modernize Medicare for our seniors. I kept my word.

We're moving forward on health care, and there's more to do. We need to make sure health care is available and affordable

for all our people. We need a safety net for those with the greatest needs. I believe in community health centers, where low and poor can get their preventative care. See, I'd rather them get the care there at a place of compassion rather than your emergency rooms in your hospitals here. It doesn't make any sense to have pressures on your emergency rooms. We can do a better job for the poor and the indigent. I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center. We'll make sure our poor children are fully subscribed in our programs for low-income families so they can get the health care they need.

We also ought to make sure health care is affordable. Listen, most of the uninsured work for small businesses. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. We ought to allow small businesses to join together in associations so they can purchase insurance at the same discounts that big companies get to do. We got to expand health savings accounts so workers in small businesses are able to pay low premiums and people can save tax-free for a health care account they manage, a health care account they can call their own.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we must do something about the junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of health care. By forcing doctors to practice defensive medicine, medical lawsuits cost the Government \$28 billion a year. That means those lawsuits cost you \$28 billion a year. Lawsuits—medical lawsuits cost our economy anywhere from 60 to 100 billion dollars a year. They drive up the insurance premiums, which drive good doctors out of practice. I have talked to too many ob-gyns that are having trouble practicing. I've talked to too many expectant moms who are having to drive mile after mile because of these lawsuits. You cannot be pro-doctor, pro-patient, and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. You have to make a choice. My opponent made

his choice, and he put a personal injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm standing with the docs and the patients. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

We have a difference when it comes to health care. My opponent has a plan that calls for bigger and more intrusive Government. In one of our debates, he actually said about his health care plan, the Government has nothing to do with it. I could barely contain myself. *[Laughter]* The facts are that 8 out of 10 people who get health care under Senator Kerry's plan would be placed on a Government program. Eight million Americans would lose their private health insurance at work, and most would have to go on a Government plan like Medicaid. He claimed his plan would help small businesses. But upon analysis, small-business groups concluded that his plan is an overpriced albatross that would saddle small businesses with 225 new mandates.

The choice in this election is clear. My opponent wants to move in the direction of Government-run health care. I believe health decisions ought to be made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

We're moving toward an ownership society in America. There's an old saying that says no one ever washes a rental car—*[laughter]*—a lot of wisdom in that. *[Laughter]* When you own something, you care about it. When you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country. That's why we're promoting entrepreneurship, creating an environment where the small-business owner can flourish. Every time a small business is started someone is realizing the American Dream. We're encouraging health savings accounts, so people have the security of owning their own health care that they could take with them from job to job. We're promoting homeownership. I love the idea that more and more Americans from all walks of life are opening up the door where they live

and saying, "Welcome to my house. Welcome to my piece of property."

In a new term, we'll take the next step to build an ownership society by strengthening Social Security. The Social Security system needs fixing. I came to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. Now, those who are on Social Security don't need to worry. Remember in the 2000 campaign when I was running, they said, "If George W. gets elected, he's going to take away your checks." Well, our seniors got their checks. They will continue to get their checks. Baby boomers are in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether or not Social Security will be around when they need it. For their sake, we must strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their payroll taxes in a personal savings account that will earn a better rate or interest than the current trust, a personal savings account they can call their own, an account the Government can never take away.

When it comes to Social Security, as you heard the other night, my opponent wants to maintain the status quo. He's against the Social Security reforms I outlined. As a matter of fact, he's against just about every reform that gives more authority and more control to the individual. On issue after issue, from Medicare without choices to schools with less accountability to higher taxes, he takes the side of more Government.

There's a word for that attitude. It is called liberalism. He dismisses that as simply a label. He must have seen it differently when he said to a newspaper, "I'm a liberal and proud of it." [Laughter] The non-partisan National Journal magazine did a study, named him the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. That's hard work. That's hard to do. [Laughter] It's

hard to make Ted Kennedy the conservative Senator from Massachusetts. He can run, but he cannot hide.

I have a different point of view, a different philosophy. I do not believe in big Government, and I do not believe that Government should be indifferent. I'm a compassionate conservative. I believe in policies that empower people to improve their lives, not try to run their lives. We're helping men and women find the skills and tools to prosper in a time of change. We'll help all Americans have a future of dignity and independence. That is how I have led, and that is how I will continue to lead for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. In this time of change, some things do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In times of change, we all must support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. We stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

Now, my opponent's words on these issues are a little muddy—[laughter]—but his record is plenty clear. He says he supports the institution of marriage, but he voted against the Defense of Marriage Act, which my predecessor signed into law.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He voted against the ban on the brutal practice of partial-birth abortion.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He called the Reagan years a time of moral darkness.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. There is a mainstream in American politics, and my opponent sits on

the far left bank. He can run, but he cannot hide.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're defending the homeland. We are reforming and strengthening our intelligence capabilities. We are transforming our military. Our All-Volunteer Army will remain an all-volunteer army.

My opponent seems to be willing to say almost anything he thinks will benefit him politically. After standing on the stage, after the debates, I made it very plain, we will not have an all-volunteer army. And yet, this week—we will have an all-volunteer army. Let me restate that. *[Laughter]* We will not have a draft. No matter what my opponent tries to tell people and scare them, we will have an all-volunteer army. The only person talking about a draft is my opponent. The only politicians who have supported a draft are Democrats. And the best way to avoid a draft is to vote for me.

As part of our strategy, we will stay on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home. We will spread freedom and liberty. And we will prevail.

The strategy is succeeding. Think about the world as it was 3½ years ago. Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida. Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups. Saudi Arabia was a fertile ground for terrorist fundraising. Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons. Iraq was a dangerous place and a gathering threat. And

Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks.

Because we led, Afghanistan is free and is now an ally in the war on terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida and its associates have been brought to justice.

In defending ourselves, in fighting for our security, we have freed over 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq. Think about what has happened in Afghanistan. I want the youngsters to understand what has taken place in about 3½ years. It used to be, those people lived under—in Afghanistan lived under the brutal reign of the Taliban. They lived in darkness. These people were so backward and so barbaric that young girls couldn't go to school. Their mothers were whipped in the public square if they didn't toe the ideological line. Because we protected ourselves, we liberated the people of Afghanistan from the Taliban. And by millions, they showed up at the polls to vote. The first voter in the Presidential election was a 19-year-old woman.

Iraq will be holding Presidential elections. Think how far that country has come in a short period of time from the days of mass graves and torture chambers to a country beginning—a democracy beginning to grow. And it's in our interests to promote freedom. It's in our interests these countries become free, because free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentment and breed violence for export. Free societies and free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them. Freedom will help us keep the peace.

And so our mission is clear. We will help these countries train the armies and police so the people of Afghanistan and Iraq can do the hard work of defending democracy. We will help them get on the path of stability as quickly as possible, and then our

troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

We have a great United States military, and I'm proud to be their Commander in Chief. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. I want to thank the military families who are here for their sacrifices. And I assure you, we'll keep the commitments I have made to our troops. We will make sure they have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the Congress in September of 2003 and requested \$87 billion of supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The support was strong for that request, so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When you're out gathering the vote, remind your fellow citizens that only four Members of the Senate voted to authorize the use of force and voted against funding for our troops—only four—two of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember my opponent's famous quote when asked about his vote. He said, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's given a lot of explanations since then. One explanation was, "The whole thing was just a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Tomorrow is the one-year anniversary of Senator Kerry's vote against funding for our troops. My opponent's many and conflicting positions on this issue are a case study into why his contradictions call into question his credibility and ability to lead our Nation. In September of 2003, as the \$87 billion funding package was being debated in Congress, Senator Kerry said, "It would be irre-

sponsible to abandon our troops by voting against it." Just one month later, he did exactly that irresponsible thing and voted not to fund our troops. And so, what happened to change the Senator's mind so abruptly in one month? His opponent in the Democrat primary, Howard Dean, was gaining ground as an antiwar candidate. Senator Kerry apparently decided supporting the troops, even while they were in harm's way, was not as important as shoring up his political position.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. At a time of great threat for our country, at a time of great challenge in the world, the Commander in Chief must stand on principle, not on the shifting sands of political convenience.

The differences are clear when it comes to defending the country. Senator Kerry proposed that we should pass a "global test" before we defend ourselves.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. The problem with that "global test" is that the Senator can never pass it. [Laughter] In 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries throughout the world joined the coalition. Yet, even after the United Nations' approval, Senator Kerry voted against the authorization of the use of force. If the 1991 gulf war didn't pass his "global test," nothing will pass his "global test."

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And that makes America more dangerous. It makes the world less secure. I'll work with our allies. I'll build coalitions. But I will never turn over our national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. You know, one of our friends is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. That probably doesn't sound too unusual, except think back some 60 years ago when we were at war with the Japanese. They were

our mortal enemy. My dad fought against the Japanese. I'm confident many relatives out here fought against the Japanese. And it was a tough war, a brutal war.

After the war was over, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally. So did other Americans. There was a lot of skepticism as we worked with Japan to build a democracy. You can understand that. "This enemy could never become a democracy," some said. "Why do we want to help somebody who hurt so many of our citizens? Why do we care about a country that attacked us?" However, because people had belief in the power of liberty to transform, today, I sit down with Prime Minister Koizumi as a friend, talking about keeping the peace we all want.

Someday, a duly elected leader from Iraq will be sitting down with the President of the United States talking about peace in the Middle East, and our children and our grandchildren will be better off for it.

Extending freedom also means confronting the evil of anti-Semitism. Today I signed the Global Anti-Semitism Review Act of 2004. This law commits the Government to keep a record of anti-Semitic acts throughout the world and also a record of responses to them. This Nation will keep watch and will make sure that the ancient impulse of anti-Semitism never finds a home in the modern world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This is not one

of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve and clear vision and the deep faith in the values that makes this a great nation. And one of those deep faiths we believe and understand is that we know that freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. There were workers there in hardhats yelling at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." A fellow grabbed me by the arm. He looked me right in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending our security, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate you. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. outside the office building at 525 Fentress Blvd. near the Daytona International Speedway. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush and Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings of Florida; Bill France, Jr., former president, NASCAR; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks to the 2004 United States Olympic and Paralympic Teams *October 18, 2004*

Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. It's such an honor for Laura and me to welcome the mighty United States Olym-

pic team to the White House. We're really proud of our athletes. We want to welcome the U.S. Olympians and the Paralympians